




**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT
FOR NEW AND BEGINNING TEACHERS**

TEACHING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES

SEGMENT #2: QUESTIONING

-  **VIDEO SEGMENT TRANSCRIPT**
-  **PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS**
-  **ANNOTATED RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPY**



Virginia Commonwealth University

The Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute

L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

Richmond, Virginia

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A project administered by

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Professional Development Toolkit for New and Beginning Teachers



The PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT FOR NEW AND BEGINNING TEACHERS is a research-based video streamed program with accompanying resource documents. The program is an outgrowth of a previous Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute (CEPI) online mentoring study at Virginia Commonwealth University. The findings of the online mentoring study revealed twelve topics new and beginning teachers felt additional university training would have led them to more effective use of best practices in the classroom. In this program, each of the twelve topics is presented in two to six stand alone video segments. The total number of segments is forty five. Suggested uses, in addition to personal viewing by K-12 teachers for self improvement, include professional development, mentor and mentee, university prospective teacher, and small or large group training.

The facilitators are university faculty and practitioners with field experience. Each is currently involved in teacher training or serves as a staff development administrator. All are currently engaged in educational research, teaching and/or educational policy development.

The teachers in the video programs are classroom teachers. Some of them were participants in the 2006 Online Mentoring Study in which the topics for this project were identified. They represent all disciplines in K-12 grades.

Resource documents for the programs are provided as PDF files to facilitate the use of the 45 video segments. The first set of documents is composed of: (1) a description of the project, (2) an introduction to program facilitators, including a definition of each topic, and a list of the video segments, and (3) a research formative study summary that helped to guide the project's development. The second set of documents is composed of: (1) a description of the project, (2) a full text transcript for each video segment, (3) a set of problems and solutions related to each video segment in the form of a work-study guide, and (4) an annotated bibliographic summary of references and Internet links for each transcript. Many of the organizations and agencies referenced in the transcripts are actively involved in the development of video and professional development presentations that support policy and advocacy.

Every reasonable effort is made to present current and accurate information. Internet content, however, does appear, disappear and change over time. CEPI, as a university-based educational policy research institute endorses no specific position of any listed group.

TEACHING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES

SEGMENT #2: QUESTIONING

VIDEO SEGMENT TRANSCRIPT

Teaching Strategies and Practices: Teaching methods, strategies and practices required to understand how students differ in the ways they learn; and how to create learning experiences that make subject matter meaningful.

Facilitator: Dr. [Tammy Milby](#), Reading Faculty
Department of Teaching and Learning
School of Education
Virginia Commonwealth University

AUDIO	VIDEO
<p>Research demonstrates that good questions are thought-provoking and clear. These questions stimulate student responses and are followed by a few seconds of wait time to allow for processing information. Avoid the use of vague questions or guesses. Instead, include more purposeful prompts which require more than a 'yes' or 'no' response. As you ask questions, move around the classroom to utilize proximity to engage your learners.</p> <p>Hello. My name is Dr. Tammy Milby. I am on the faculty in the Department of Teaching & Learning at Virginia Commonwealth University. Today, I would like to share some best practices with you on questioning techniques.</p> <p>Great questions will promote critical thinking and get a discussion started easily. Consider the following questioning tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is challenging to generate questions requiring higher-level thinking during the application of a lesson. Instead, create questions during planning. As you prepare for the lesson, list a few key questions on your lesson plan or on an index card.• Consider having other students answer the questions instead of just the teacher being seen as the "expert" who answers all the classroom questions.• Incorporate questions which allow students to connect important concepts. Stick with questions on your main focus rather than strange or unusual facts about the topic.• End your lessons with an opportunity for students to record questions that are still lingering after your discussion. One idea is to have students submit these questions as "tickets out the door" in order to leave your classroom.	<p>DR. MILBY</p>

Here are two questions for you to think about and discuss from our time together today:

- What was the main idea of this segment?
- How does 'effective questioning' compare with 'learner engagement'.

Now that you have responded to these questions, let's hear some experienced teachers describe different methods that they use for asking questions in the classroom.

My name is Misty Burton. I am a middle school teacher. This is my first year in the classroom. One of my biggest challenges has been giving students enough "wait time" to respond. After asking a question, I've learned to pause and allow students plenty of time to think before answering. When asking a series of questions, I've also learned to have students focus on one question at a time. Having 25 students blurt out different answers at the same time can be overwhelming for the students as well as the teacher. I know that the teacher must not become the "expert" by answering her own questions. It is important for me to draw out a variety of responses from my students through careful questioning. It is also important for me to remember to record questions that linger for lesson development and follow-up at a later time..

**Misty
Burton**

My name is Crystal Heflebower. I have taught Kindergarten classes for three years at Ridge Elementary School. In my Kindergarten classes, I have learned that it is important for students to feel safe and open to talk in front of their peers and teacher. Some questions I ask in the classroom are ones that will provide students with the opportunity to express their current ideas about a subject or thing or even to reflect on related experiences when they were younger. Asking questions also is a way to allow students to actively participate in class discussions. In this way, they interact with the teacher and classmates. As they share, they learn.

**CRYSTAL
HEFLEBOWER**

Another way of asking questions of my students is to seek very detailed information about what they should know about a sequence of events. At times, questions are used as an assessment tool to evaluate learning. Based upon the answers I receive, I know whether my students understand a certain concept or if I need to re-teach the lesson. Take the time to really listen to your students. Ask questions and then think carefully about how you respond to your learners. Effective questioning improves achievement and helps educators tune into student understandings. Start working today to improve your instructional delivery as well as your interactions with students. You will find that your efforts are rewarding.

Take the time to really listen to your students. Ask questions and then think carefully about how you respond to your learners. Effective questioning improves achievement and helps educators tune into student understandings. Start working today to improve your instructional delivery as well as your interactions with students. You will find that your efforts are rewarding.

Dr. Milby



PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Ask yourself: What teaching strategies do you use most often? Why? What other strategies would you like to use to facilitate greater student learning?

Suggested use for this module:

1. Analyze:

Please select one of the scenarios below and problem-solve a list of possible solutions. Record your ideas in the space provided. Discuss these ideas with your other educators (mentor, colleagues, or other beginning teachers).

2. View:

Watch the corresponding video on this topic. How does this information change your ideas?

3. Compare:

Revisit the scenario selected. Next, review the section entitled, "Possible Solutions" comparing the ideas listed with your own list.

4. Reflect:

How will you apply this new information to your current or future classroom? What goal will you set to help you begin to change your practices? What support is needed to help you accomplish this goal?

5. Apply:

List the first step towards change below. Create a timeline for success and place deadlines in your personal planner as a reminder. How will you know when you have met your goals?

Scenarios 1 & 2: Teaching Strategies

Scenario 1

It is time to begin a classroom discussion on the topic that you have been teaching. Although your class is usually quite talkative, the room becomes eerily silent when you try to start the conversations. Students are just looking down, pretending to locate classroom supplies, or writing in their notebooks. How can you best facilitate classroom discussions?

Scenario 2

Your school principal stops by to visit your classroom almost daily. She often glances at your lesson plans or stops to talk with students about what they are working on. Sometimes, she will leave a note of encouragement about something she thinks you are doing well. On your way to lunch, she catches you to mention that she noticed many off-task students during a lecture (15 out of 25 students). She wants you to think about different ways to build learner engagement during instruction.

What teaching techniques could you include in your upcoming lessons to address this issue?

Circle the scenario that you selected below:

Scenario 1

Scenario 2

Record a list of your own possible solutions here:

Summary & Goal Setting:

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Questioning

Good questions are thought-provoking and clear. These questions stimulate student responses and are followed by 3-10 seconds of wait time to allow for processing time. Avoid the use of vague questions or guesses. Instead, include more purposeful prompts which require more than a 'yes' or 'no' response. Great questions will promote critical thinking and get a discussion started easily. For example, a teacher might ask the following higher-level thinking questions for partner or whole-group discussion:

Do you agree with _____?

What ideas could you add to our discussion?

What solutions do you recommend for _____?

How does _____ compare with _____?

What is the main idea of _____?

What do you think about _____?

Engagement:

- Make connections to students' prior knowledge, interests, and learning goals. Use appropriate pop culture, current events, landmarks, and examples within your lessons.
- Read literature aloud to students. Reading aloud piques interest and models vocabulary and eloquent language for students which they can incorporate into their own writing. It is appropriate to incorporate short read selections in any subject area or grade level.
- Incorporate interaction, examples and hands-on learning into your teaching. What manipulatives could you use to teach your lesson?
- Plan stops during lecture or whole-group teaching to refocus student attention. Use a 'think, share, pair' approach to have students tell their neighbors about something they just learned. Try getting feedback on a controversial topic by using 'thumbs up' to agree, 'thumbs down' to disagree, and 'thumbs sideways' to demonstrate a neutral response.
- Generate responses using discussion cubes or by holding up answers on dry erase boards during your lessons.
- Incorporate movement into different activities. Create human timelines or encourage students to move to one of the four corners of the room if they strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, or disagree about a prompt.
- Try inquiry based learning to encourage small groups of students to discover find their own solutions to a problem.
- Include more visuals to help students remember key ideas. Graphic organizers can help learners visualize similarities and differences, compare ideas, determine hierarchies, and recall important facts.

Giving prompt feedback:

Feedback should be specific and focus directly on the work which is being evaluated. Avoid making personal judgments about the personality of the student. Specific feedback on how to improve

assignments will improve the quality of the work which is completed. Try providing two to three specific suggestions for improvement rather than using generic terms for feedback (good job or please revise).

ANNOTATED RESERCH BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ❖ Invest in training strategies that provide direct feedback on classroom practice through ongoing consultation, mentoring, or coaching.

Klein, L. G. & Knitzer, J. (2006). *Effective preschool curricula and teaching strategies.*, Retrieved September 30, 2007, from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/download_100.pdf

- ❖ Participate in education and training that focuses on how young children grow and learn.

Klein, L. G. & Knitzer, J. (2006). *Effective preschool curricula and teaching strategies.*, Retrieved September 30, 2007, from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/download_100.pdf

- ❖ Translate research findings so that parents, teachers, and community leaders can understand whether the differences identified are meaningful and make a difference in children's achievement.

Klein, L. G. & Knitzer, J. (2006). *Effective preschool curricula and teaching strategies.* Retrieved September 30, 2007, from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/download_100.pdf

- ❖ As with other professions, teachers' skills develop and improve over time. Many experts consider differentiated instruction to be a practice only used by veteran teachers, because it involves the "fine motor skills" of teaching, while many novice teachers - preservice teachers and teachers in their first year of teaching - are still trying to master the "gross motor skills" of teaching. Research on novice teachers indicates a focus on classroom management issues, teacher-centered teaching, and instructional planning, not to mention surviving the student teaching or first year experience. This makes it difficult for teachers to focus on differentiating instruction to meet student needs (Fuller & Brown, 1975; Hollingsworth, 1989; Hollingsworth and Lidstone, 1992; Tomlinson, et al, 1994).

Gould, Holly C. (n.d.). Can novice teachers differentiate instruction? Yes, they CAN! Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/differentiated/gould.htm>

- ❖ Fuller and Brown (1975) found that novices proceed through three stages: survival concerns, teaching situation concerns, and pupil concerns. It is in this last stage that novice teachers focus on "concerns about recognizing the social and emotional needs of pupils" (Fuller & Brown, 1975, p. 37) as well as meeting individual instructional needs and fairness to students. This research indicates that novices do not typically attend to student differences in stages one and two.

Gould, Holly C. (n.d.). Can novice teachers differentiate instruction? Yes, they CAN! Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/differentiated/gould.htm>

- ❖ Lidstone and Hollingsworth (1992) conducted a longitudinal study of the first four years of teaching and found three stages of cognitive attention: management focused, subject/pedagogy focused, and student learning focused. Novice teachers begin with "rote knowledge of pedagogy." This is when the novice recognizes the concept but does not use it, uses it poorly, or has a superficial understanding of why it is worth using. The next stage involves routine processing. Now the new teacher applies the technique but only superficially and in specific contexts. The final stage is comprehensive knowledge

Teaching Strategies and Practices: Segment #2 Questioning

when the teachers' beliefs are integrated with teaching performance, concepts are understood and applied across contexts, and they have cognitive space available for attending to student needs. While it is clear that novices have knowledge of pedagogy at the beginning stages of their teacher development, the implication is that novices can only begin to differentiate for varying student needs after four years of teaching

Gould, Holly C. (n.d.). Can novice teachers differentiate instruction? Yes, they CAN! Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/differentiated/gould.htm>

- ❖ When it comes to differentiating to meet student needs, Tomlinson et al. (1994) found that novice teachers did recognize differences among students but found it difficult to be responsive to those differences. Novices were unclear about the meaning of differentiation and did not know how to translate it into classroom practice. Other factors found to inhibit novices from differentiating included the lack of emphasis on differentiated instruction by cooperating teachers, principals, college supervisors, and college professors. This lack of emphasis continues to perpetuate the current "one-size-fits-all" method of teaching prevalent in so many schools today. Because schools continue to become increasingly diverse, differentiation needs to become a focus early in the novices' experience because, as they will soon discover, one size does not fit all.

Gould, Holly C. (n.d.). Can novice teachers differentiate instruction? Yes, they CAN! Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/differentiated/gould.htm>

- ❖ Teacher colleagues help us see that teaching for understanding in a concerted and committed way calls for a depth of technique that most teachers' initial training and ensuing experiences have not provided. Thinking of instruction in terms of performances of understanding, arranging ongoing assessment, tapping the potential of powerful representations--these have a very limited presence in preservice and in-service teacher development. So a second strand of any effort to make a pedagogy of understanding real must be to help teachers acquire such techniques

Perkins, David. (1993). *Teaching for understanding*. Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.aypf.org/publications/EssentialsofHighSchoolReform.pdf>

- ❖ Effective staff development prepares teachers to use research-based teaching strategies appropriate to their instructional objectives and their students.

Killion, Joellen. (2000). *Explore research to identify best instructional strategies*. Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.aypf.org/publications/EssentialsofHighSchoolReform.pdf>

- ❖ Examining instructional strategies appropriate to specific content areas, developmental stages of students, and applicable to learning outcomes is a crucial decision teachers make as they design lessons.

Killion, Joellen. (2000). *Explore research to identify best instructional strategies*. Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.aypf.org/publications/EssentialsofHighSchoolReform.pdf>

- ❖ In today's standards-based classrooms, many strategies that worked best a few years ago tend to isolate knowledge and skills rather than promote application and integration across content areas.

Killion, Joellen. (2000). *Explore research to identify best instructional strategies*. Retrieved September 30, 2007, from <http://www.aypf.org/publications/EssentialsofHighSchoolReform.pdf>

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